



TOWN OF ELLINGTON

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ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION REGULAR MEETING MINUTES DECEMBER 11, 2013

PRESENT: Chairman Sean Kelly, Vice Chairman Chris Todd, David Hurley, Stanislav Moline arrived at 7:07, Stefanie Cunningham arrived at 7:08 and left at 7:45 and Alternate Donna Resutek

ABSENT: Gilbert Gamboa

STAFF

PRESENT: Lisa Houlihan, Town Planner and Kristin Michaud, Recording Secretary

OTHERS

PRESENT: James Prichard, Board of Selectmen (BOS) Liaison

I. CALL TO ORDER:

Chairman Kelly called the EDC meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

II. PUBLIC COMMENTS: NONE

III. NEW BUSINESS:

BY CONSENSUS, THE COMMISSION ADDED TO THE AGENDA A DISCUSSION WITH GREGORY LEWIS, BUSINESS ADVISOR, FROM THE CONNECTICUT SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER.

Mr. Gregory Lewis, Business Advisor, Connecticut Small Business Development Center (SBDC), came forward and gave a background on what it is they do to assist start up businesses and established businesses grow, noting that there is no fee to any business for the service they provide. He stated that the SBDC is headquartered at the UCONN School of Business within the Economic Development Center. He elaborated on his resources and how there are other members throughout the state that have diversified backgrounds to assist start-up companies or existing ones. He noted with his resources there isn't anyone he and his colleagues would not be able to assist.

Mr. Lewis stated that he would like to establish an ongoing relationship with the commission. The Commission thanked Mr. Lewis for his time and information and they too agreed to a steady relationship.

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

1. Report: Tax Abatement Program

- a. Request from West Road Associates (Earthlight) 88 West Road, for tax abatement, pursuant to the Economic Development Tax Abatement Policy.

Timothy Schneider came forward for the abatement application. He stated that Earthlight has been in business since 2007 and that they specialize in energy conservation. Recently, Earthlight began selling solar systems and they are increasing staff by three employees to support the additional business. They are adding 2100 square feet to the existing building for warehouse and office space.

Lisa Houlihan, Town Planner, reviewed with the commission the process of the program and noted the staff reviews. She read the comments from the First Selectman that state that he finds the abatement within the program parameters.

MOVED (TODD), SECONDED (HURLEY) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE A THREE-YEAR TAX ABATEMENT AT 50% FOR WEST ROAD ASSOCIATES [EARTHLIGHT] BASED ON THE INFORMATION PROVIDED AND MAKE A RECOMMENDATION TO THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN FOR ACTION.

THE COMMISSION FINDS THAT THE ABATEMENT MEETS THE PURPOSE AND THE OUTCOME OF THE PROGRAM BY ENCOURAGING GROWTH AND INVESTMENT IN EXISTING BUSINESS THAT WILL INCREASE LONG-TERM TAX REVENUE AND RETENTION OF INDUSTRY IN TOWN.

Ms. Houlihan then reviewed the next steps in the program, noting that a referral will be sent to the BOS. Mr. Schneider will be required to present the application for abatement to the BOS. If they support the abatement, it will be forwarded to Town Meeting for vote.

BY CONSENSUS, THE COMMISSION ADDED TO THE AGENDA A DISCUSSION REGARDING A REQUEST FOR TAX ABATEMENT FROM DESCO PROFESSIONAL BUILDERS, INC AND ELLINGTON PROPERTY MANAGEMENT, LLC, ASSOCIATED WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW 16,000 SQUARE FOOT BUILDING AND THE ADDITION OF MACHINERY, VEHICLES AND EMPLOYEES AT 290 SOMERS ROAD.

Robert Anderson & John Ridzon, owners/applicants, came forward for the request. Mr. Anderson explained their future expansion plans and the addition of a 16,000 square foot building on the property.

Chairman Kelly asked for a ballpark amount the business was worth. Mr. Anderson stated the building itself is around 3 million between land and building improvements. Mr. Anderson also noted that the additional equipment between the two businesses is well over 1 million. They are projecting to add at least another million in assets.

Vice Chairman Todd asked Ms. Houlihan if the commission should treat the real estate and machinery as 2 separate entities. Ms. Houlihan stated that as the policy is written, it only allows abatement on permanent improvements.

Chairman Kelly noted that all the taxes are one on the property even though it is two businesses applying.

Commissioner Todd asked when they were looking to break ground. Mr. Anderson stated this spring.

Ms. Houlihan noted that one of the reasons Mr. Anderson was added to the agenda tonight is to get a sense from the commission if this proposal is in the spirit of a program and to determine if additional information is needed. Ms. Houlihan asked Mr. Anderson if

proceeding with the project is 100% contingent on receiving the abatement. Mr. Anderson stated there was no 100% decision to move forward and if they didn't receive the abatement they would have to meet and see where to go from there.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. Houlihan noted the importance in knowing what level of abatement they are eligible for prior to being referred to the BOS. The commission requested additional breakdown of equipment and expenses to which Mr. Anderson agreed to provide.

Commissioner Todd asked Ms. Houlihan to see if large equipment/machinery could be considered for abatement, to which Ms. Houlihan agreed to obtain.

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

IV. ACTIVE BUSINESS:

Ms. Houlihan noted the commission's decision from the last meeting to permanently add to the agenda a report regarding the Tolland County Chamber of Commerce.

BY CONSENSUS, THE COMMISSION ADDED ITEM #1 TO ACTIVE BUSINESS.

1. Report: Tolland County Chamber of Commerce

Commissioner Hurley attended two meetings of the Chamber and provided a recap of what took place during the meetings

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

2. Report: Agricultural Initiatives

Nothing to report.

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

3. Report: Business Directory

Ms. Houlihan stated that the online directory will be going live around December 16, 2013, and noted delays in waiting on approvals from the Android and Apple Corporations. Once it goes live, Ms. Houlihan will be visiting business owners and getting the word out as well as sending another mailing. She noted there is much excitement from town business owners.

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

4. Report: Business Surveys and Site Visits

Nothing to report.

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

5. Report: Current Economic Activity

Nothing to report.

NO MOTIONS OR DECISIONS

V. ADMINISTRATIVE BUSINESS:

1. Approval of the November 13, 2013, regular meeting minutes.

MOVED (HURLEY), SECONDED (RESUTEK) AND PASSED UNANIMOUSLY TO APPROVE THE NOVEMBER 13, 2013 MEETING MINUTES AS WRITTEN.

2. Correspondence:

- a. Letter from Tolland County Chamber of Commerce to the Planning Department and EDC from November 18, 2013. (Welcoming the Commission to the Chamber)

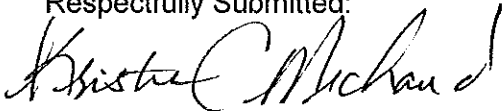
SO NOTED

Ms. Houlihan reminded the commissioners about the Route 83 Corridor Study's public information meeting being held tomorrow night at 7 pm in the Town Hall Meeting Room.

IV. ADJOURNMENT:

BY CONSENSUS THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED AT 8:06 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kristin C. Michaud". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kristin" and last name "Michaud" clearly distinguishable.

Kristin C. Michaud
Recording Secretary